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## PRESERVING LOCAL CULTURES HELPS DEVELOPMENT

In 1983 the Campania Region launched a "European Programme" designed, in conjunction with the "European Programme To Combat Poverty", to identify and rectify instances of waste or improper use of the material resources of local communities (valuable areas of the region, production capacities, etc. which were not being used), together with processes leading to the deterioration or loss of cultural resources (traditions, social relationships, etc.).

These are particularly damaging forms of gradual impoverishment because their full seriousness only becomes apparent once the community finds that it has to rebuild what has been destroyed.

It then becomes necessary to redevelop land which has been poorly used, restore old centres which have become run down either through neglect or inappropriate use, revive trades and crafts which are in the process of dying out, set up social services to replace the spirit of community which used to exist before, etc.

Not only is action to counter these "hidden" forms of impoverishment necessary; it may prove more effective and simpler than programmes intended to combat more obvious and better defined forms of poverty such as unemployment or marginalisation. More effective because measures must necessarily be applied to the community + territory system in a manner which is integrated and multidisciplinary, with all the benefits that brings (measures are better tailored to the wider requirements, ripple effects of development, etc.).

More simple because it costs less to protect existing resources than to create new ones and because the integrated nature of measures means that their cost can be spread over different budget lines.

In Campania measures of this type are especially useful since the damage from this kind of impoverishment is worth far more than the region's territorial and cultural resources. The 1980 earthquake also increased the risk of long-term "impoverishment". We know that during the process of immediate and long-term reconstruction, urgency often requires the use of technical methods which are not the local methods. Sometimes this ultimately causes more harm than the earthquake itself and makes for greater dependence on the world outside.

The Regional Programme is implemented by the "Assessorato" for industry, crafts and

small businesses which is also responsible for development and social advancement.

So assistance to the San Lorenzello Research Project might seem marginal compared to the work of the Assessorato as an institution. Especially as the conservation of features of local culture (historic centres, traditional technical methods used in the countryside, etc.) is very often seen as a barrier to "progress".

What happens in reality is that the production capacities of weak systems are defeated by products imposed from outside. These products are not necessarily better, and they not only destroy the local culture, they also hamper growth by draining away what meagre resources the area already has.

The revival of community earthquake cultures undoubtedly reduces the vulnerability of the system, but it also enables trades, technical methods and local resources to be usefully deployed, thereby favouring integrated measures which can combine growth with protection of the local culture.

Ongoing initiatives under the Programme are consistent with the Nationwide Plan for integrated measures on the living environment and are based on:

- global *planning*, which takes account of the structure of the system;
- a procedural *methodology* which assumes that all the relevant players will be involved;
- *technical formulae* designed to allow the system to regulate itself.

The San Lorenzello Research Project employs this approach; projects are planned with a strictly defined formula and methodology, geared to specific local realities and able to modify the behaviour of the system in such a way that lasting results are achieved.

It is thus an initiative fully consistent with the development policy of the Campania Region. It has the scientific expertise of the Ravello Centre behind it; it is consistent with the Council of Europe's conservation policy, and as a result it is an extremely useful product for the Assessorato.

I trust that it may also mark the beginning of a fruitful, productive collaboration.

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